

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT MEETING
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 27, 2016

8:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Senator Mike Dunleavy, Chair
Senator Charlie Huggins, Vice Chair
Senator Gary Stevens
Senator Berta Gardner

HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Representative Wes Keller, Chair
Representative Liz Vazquez, Vice Chair
Representative Jim Colver
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative David Talerico
Representative Harriet Drummond
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

MEMBERS ABSENT

SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Senator Cathy Giessel

HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

All members present

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Lora Reinbold
Representative Lynn Gattis
Representative Sam Kito

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: ALASKA NATIVE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING (ANSEP);
ALASKA MEASURES OF PROGRESS (AMP) REPORTING.

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

HERB SCHROEDER, Ph.D., Vice Provost
Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP)
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information on ANSEP.

MIKE BOURDUKOFISKY, Chief Operations Officer
Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP)
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information on ANSEP.

LISA SKILES PARADY, Executive Director
Alaska Council of School Administration (ACSA)
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information on the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

MICHAEL JOHNSON, President
Alaska Council of School Administrators
Superintendent
Copper River School District
Glennallen, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

DEENA PARAMO, Superintendent
Mat-Su Borough School District
Palmer, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

CHRIS REITAN, Superintendent
Galena City School District
Galena, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

SUE JOHNSON, Superintendent
Kuspuk School District

Aniak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

KEVIN SHIPLEY, Superintendent,

Kake School District

Kake, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

DAVE HERBERT, Superintendent

St. Mary's School District

St. Mary's, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

BOB CRUMLEY, Superintendent

Chugach School District

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

ED GRAFF, Superintendent

Anchorage School District

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

STEWART MCDONALD, Superintendent

Kodiak Island Borough School

Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

DAVID NEES, representing himself

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

MIKE HANLEY, Commissioner

Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information on the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:00:02 AM](#)

CHAIR MIKE DUNLEAVY called the joint meeting of the Senate and House Education Standing Committees to order at 8:00 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Huggins, Stevens, Gardner, and Chair Dunleavy, and Representatives Seaton, Vazquez, Colver, Kreiss-Tomkins, Talerico, and Chair Keller. Representative Drummond arrived shortly thereafter.

Presentation: Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program
(ANSEP)

[8:01:41 AM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY announced that the first order of business would be a presentation on Alaska Native Science & Engineering (ANSEP), followed by a presentation on Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

[8:01:46 AM](#)

HERB SCHROEDER, Ph.D., Vice Provost, Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP), presented information on ANSEP. He said that he started ANSEP 21 years ago. He introduced Mike Bourdukofsky, who graduated from ANSEP as a civil engineer in 2003.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY noted the presence of Representative Drummond.

DR. SCHROEDER showed a short video on ANSEP that portrayed students who were successful in the program.

[8:03:35 AM](#)

MIKE BOURDUKOFSKY, Chief Operations Officer, Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP), presented information on ANSEP. He described the components of ANSEP: Middle School Academy, STEM Career Explorations, Acceleration Academy, Summer Bridge for incoming university freshmen, and University Success. At the middle school level, 54 students are brought to the ANSEP campus every year and participate in career exploration. As they transition to high school, they can begin to take college courses. High school graduates getting ready to go to college participate in the Summer Bridge program, an internship opportunity with science and engineering partners. At the university, students are supported in their pursuit of a science or engineering degree.

MR. BOURDUKOFSKY referred to a booklet developed by the Urban Institute after an evaluation of ANSEP.

[8:04:53 AM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY noted the presence of Representatives Gattis, Reinbold, and Kito.

[8:05:13 AM](#)

MR. BOURDUKOFSKY pointed out that one of the ANSEP metrics measured at the middle school level is Algebra I completion rate. He showed a graph depicting 77 percent of students passing Algebra I or higher by the end of 8th grade. By comparison, 26 percent of all student nationally complete Algebra I by the end of 8th grade. At the high school acceleration academy level, 95 percent of students advance one level or more in math or science over a five-week period each summer. He said over 90 percent of Summer Bridge students are successfully transitioning to science or engineering BS degree programs at the University of Alaska. At the university level ANSEP has a retention rate (on track to graduate) and graduation rate of 75 percent.

[8:06:29 AM](#)

DR. SCHROEDER reported that ANSEP initiated an acceleration academy in 2009 and a middle school academy in 2010. Students who went through the middle school academy and the acceleration academy, graduate from high school a full year early and are prepared to complete a civil engineering degree at the university. It puts them in the top one-tenth of one percent of all students in the world.

He said that last summer 120 students went through the program, which initiated the idea of what could be done if ANSEP had its own high school. He discussed the idea of turning Mt. Edgecumbe into an ANSEP acceleration high school using a three-year curriculum. He showed a graph that depicted graduation results and cost per students graduating from a regular high school versus an ANSEP high school. He noted the savings of a three year program - nearly \$6 million in annual savings to the state by serving 400 students each year. He pointed out that the student's family would save the expense of a year of college, also.

[8:09:16 AM](#)

DR. SCHROEDER related UAA President Jim Johnsen's opinion that a full time acceleration high school has merit and is worthy of a serious study. He said President Johnsen intends to initiate a year-long study of its feasibility. Dr. Schroeder stressed that an acceleration high school would improve the quality of education in the state and save money. He further described a

plan to take this model into hub communities in order to serve rural Alaska students. He noted a zero fiscal note and a savings over time. He suggested that a 2,000 student school in Anchorage would save even more.

8:11:54 AM

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER asked if the new program would supplant existing Mt. Edgecumbe students.

DR. SCHROEDER said no. He described how the acceleration high school would work with a gradual set up. He noted that it would broaden opportunities for students.

8:13:02 AM

SENATOR STEVENS asked if after three years the students would transition to the UAA campus.

DR. SCHROEDER said yes.

SENATOR GARDNER asked if it was appropriate for self-selected students, nominated students, or all students. She asked if current Mt. Edgecumbe students would join in the accelerated program.

DR. SCHROEDER said yes. He explained the selection process would continue as it is; picking the best students that are available.

SENATOR GARDNER asked whether all students could participate at the acceleration level. She inquired about the current selection process of ANSEP middle school academy students.

MR. BOURDUKOFSKY replied that anyone who has the math background could be placed - any student who has completed Algebra I. They would then take intermediate algebra, college algebra, trigonometry, and calculus.

8:15:54 AM

DR. SCHROEDER said ANSEP's goal is to raise the bar in K-12 education. He gave an example of a middle school in Bethel that revised its curriculum so their students could complete Algebra I. He noted that many other districts have done the same.

8:16:47 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked about the chronology of ANSEP's conversations with Mt. Edgecumbe and the legislature.

DR. SCHROEDER recalled his recent discussions with legislators and Native leaders, and with Commissioner Hanley and Superintendent Hutton from Mt. Edgecumbe. He said he has offered to explain the plan in Sitka.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked what the community thinks about the plan.

DR. SCHROEDER said no one has voiced opposition so far. He said some are worried about maintaining what Mt. Edgecumbe has, but he declared that Mt. Edgecumbe would become the best high school in the whole nation within four or five years.

[8:18:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON noted Mt. Edgecumbe selects the best students available. He asked if a new selection process would be used for an accelerated high school program.

DR. SCHROEDER said that over time he would like to see every middle school in the state offer Algebra I. He shared statistics that show that remediation at high school is a national problem.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if a different group of students would replace those who now attend Mt. Edgecumbe.

DR. SCHROEDER assured that they would be the same students. He pointed out that ANSEP works with students from 96 communities.

[8:21:14 AM](#)

At ease

[8:21:43 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER questioned whether the best students were selected for Mt. Edgecumbe currently. She recalled that there were students from the Office of Children's Services who had to be removed from their homes and so boarded at Mt. Edgecumbe.

DR. SCHROEDER said those social referrals would still be included.

[8:23:01 AM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY noted it would be an ongoing discussion. He suggested committee members have further conversations regarding ANSEP.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked for the rate of ANSEP students attending college having to take remediation courses.

DR. SCHROEDER said none required remediation.

MR. BOURDUKOFISKY further explained that all students would have taken all the prerequisites for freshman level math for the science and engineering programs. Most would be ready for calculus-level courses.

DR. SCHROEDER said in the past, students have not had the opportunity to take accelerated classes. He gave an example of a seventeen-year-old student from Cantwell, Alaska, who recently enrolled at UAA with all his math completed.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON spoke of the Alaska Scholars Program, which are the top ten percent of high school graduates, having to take developmental courses in college. He asked if ANSEP students need remediation English classes.

DR. SCHROEDER said they did not, and spoke of how the program socializes ANSEP students before they get to the college campus.

[8:26:37 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER stated that she sees ANSEP as an exciting concept and a demonstration project with the possibility of building a cadre of highly effective teachers. She suggested it could be transformative for the entire education system.

DR. SCHROEDER described how students who have completed courses, work with students who have not. They are already experiencing "teaching" and may decide to become teachers.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY saw it as an interesting mentoring project, similar to a teacher mentoring program for potential Alaska teachers, such as in Lake & Peninsula School District that recruits students to be classroom aides first, and then hires them as teachers. He suggested that ANSEP has increased the probability of more Alaska Native teachers.

DR. SCHROEDER agreed. He gave several examples of ANSEP graduates who became teachers.

[8:29:01 AM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY wished to see the statistics on female enrollees and graduates in ANSEP.

DR. SCHROEDER referred to the demographic report on page seven of the Urban Institute's booklet on "Building Alaska's Science and Engineering Pipeline."

SENATOR STEVENS expressed excitement about ANSEP because it has the opportunity to raise the bar in education. He pointed out that change is hard and the establishment may have difficulty with the concepts.

[8:30:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND said acceleration is not a new concept. She spoke of her experience in the Bronx High School of Science, a public high school in New York City. She noted other science and math prep schools where 99 percent of graduates went to college. She also expressed excitement about ANSEP.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked how many students are currently enrolled.

DR. SCHROEDER said there were more than 1,500 students from 6th grade through doctoral programs.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked what road map Mr. Schroeder followed to develop the program.

DR. SCHROEDER provided his background of working for the federal government in 1994 on sanitation research in rural communities. He noted the poor communication between the public health service and the communities. As a professor at the university, he started an engineering program for Alaska Natives in order to improve the communication. He stated that he had no idea what he was getting into and there were many problems, but he persisted by changing the approach to education.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ referred to ANSEP 8th grade math completion data in 2009 and asked if there is more recent information.

DR. SCHROEDER said current statistics have not changed since 2009.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked how ANSEP compares to Alaska numbers for Algebra I completion rates.

DR. SCHROEDER thought that only 10 percent of Alaska students had completed Algebra I by the end of eighth grade and it was

lower than that for Alaska Native students. He offered to provide data on Alaska students.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ said it would be interesting to see that.

DR. SCHROEDER noted it was lower than 26 percent.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked what ANSEP's budget was for the last two years and how much was federal and state monies.

DR. SCHROEDER described the current budget at between \$5 million and \$6 million. More than 40 percent is from philanthropic funds and some comes from contracts with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management; federal agencies who want to employ ANSEP students. There is about \$1 million from the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), and about \$1 million from UAA. He noted that the bulk of the funding is not from general funds.

[8:35:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked for the average class size.

DR. SCHROEDER replied that they work with units of 54 students in middle school and it varies with the acceleration program, which had 120 students last summer.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ inquired how many ANSEP graduates go to UAA.

DR. SCHROEDER said almost all students stay in Alaska - 99 percent. Last year everybody attended UAA.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked for details about entrance criteria per grade.

[8:37:25 AM](#)

MR. BOURDUKOFSKY explained that the criteria is different at each level. At the middle school level, students submit a transcript, test scores, a recommendation letter, and an essay and are measured against all applicants. They must also be students who are on track to finish Algebra I by the end of eighth grade. High school applicants must test into college level math, intermediate algebra, and science courses that are offered. At the college level there is no academic review process after they are enrolled at UAA.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked what ANSEP's acceptance rate is.

DR. SCHROEDER replied that there are way more who apply than ANSEP can accept. He pointed out that they do not have the financial resources to accept more.

MR. BOURDUKOFSKY added that about half who apply are accepted. He said that at the university level all students who apply are accepted into ANSEP. Last summer there were about 500 ANSEP students on campus.

DR. SCHROEDER spoke of the letter sent to students who are not accepted. It details what they have to do to be accepted the next time.

[8:40:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if the year-round boarding school concept will change anything about who will apply.

DR. SCHROEDER said no. He predicted that the students would be excited about it.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON inquired if students who are currently at boarding schools participate in ANSEP.

DR. SCHROEDER said they have had students from Mt. Edgecumbe and from Galina.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ requested a breakdown on where ANSEP students come from.

DR. SCHROEDER agreed to provide that information. He said students come from 96 different communities.

[8:42:01 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER agreed that it was an exciting opportunity. He challenged the committees to consider writing a bill on the program.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ said the program is exciting. She wished to see a similar program for non-Native students.

DR. SCHROEDER said everyone is welcome to ANSEP. He predicted that many parents in the state are going to want this opportunity. He stated that ANSEP is about raising the bar for the state. He opined that once that happens, the philanthropic money will flow into the state from all over. He said that ANSEP has raised more than \$40 million to support its work.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ thanked Dr. Schroeder for raising the bar.

8:44:00 AM

SENATOR HUGGINS thanked Dr. Schroeder for his work. He asked what the key implementation study finding related to the "tense climate" at UAA was about.

DR. SCHROEDER explained that a year-and-a-half ago the atmosphere at the university was tense because there were people in the system who were fearful about losing funding because of ANSEP. Currently at UAA there is a very supportive administration, but there are still those in the system that don't appreciate potential. There also used to be overt racism, which has lessened, but is still present.

SENATOR HUGGINS noted the Mat-Su School District has an accelerated program where high school students can take college prep and college courses. He asked if Dr. Schroeder has worked with other schools on the ANSEP model.

DR. SCHROEDER said he works well with the Mat-Su program and pointed out that both programs face the same challenges.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ referred to page 11 of the Urban Institute's booklet and asked about "careful sustainability planning."

DR. SCHROEDER stated that careful sustainability planning will be crucial to ANSEP's long-term success. He said ANSEP recognized sustainability as a problem years ago so it developed nine key sustainability goals, which all have been met. One of the goals that was met this year was to have Alaska Native instructors on university faculty or in masters programs, so there is a cadre of leaders in ANSEP going forward.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ complimented Dr. Schroeder and read a finding that stated, "ANSEP has benefited from a charismatic leader whose personality is central to the program."

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON spoke of ANSEP as key to success in rural Alaska. He suggested that the proposed ANSEP boarding school program would meet Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements, such as every student must have access to advanced courses. He suggested to look at the success of this program and

other acceleration programs for the betterment of rural Alaska. He spoke in favor of giving ANSEP the ability to grow.

[8:50:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked about a statement in the booklet that talks about program expansion to additional university campuses and schools and the operational challenges, such as staffing and facilities.

DR. SCHROEDER said it means, "We don't have enough money." ANSEP is only limited by the amount of resources available. He pointed out that the staff of ANSEP consists of eight people.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked what would be the optimal budget.

DR. SCHROEDER responded that it would be enough to take the program to the whole state and would be cost effective.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked how much money would be needed for that.

DR. SCHROEDER said he has no idea and has to take it one piece at a time.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked how much would be needed for the Mt. Edgecumbe program.

DR. SCHROEDER shared how a successful Mt. Edgecumbe would take some pressure away from the university, by preparing students before they enroll. He stated that he would need no new funds at this point.

[8:53:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked for the college graduation rate.

DR. SCHROEDER said since 2010, 75 percent of ANSEP college enrollees have graduated or are still enrolled in the program. The national average is nowhere near that. For regular Native enrollees, it is below 30 percent.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked about three things Dr. Schroeder would do if ANSEP was fully funded.

DR. SCHROEDER replied that he would build the acceleration high school, make middle school academies available in districts around the state in order to run one a month, and make sure students have scholarship support at the university.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked how much potential the cyber approach has in ANSEP.

MR. SCHROEDER said cyber approach does not fit with ANSEP's model because ANSEP does everything in teams. He explained that they have been trying cyber learning for a long time, but students' education is built on friendships.

[8:56:05 AM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY noted that public education is for lifting challenged individuals up. He stated that ANSEP statistics are very convincing. He suggested that legislators give this program some thought.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY turned the meeting over to Chair Keller.

CHAIR KELLER announced that the next topic would be Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) Assessment & Accountability

CHAIR KELLER referred to the announcement by Commissioner Hanley that the state is abandoning the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) assessment and will be putting out a new RFP to find a new vendor. He commended Commissioner Hanley, superintendents, and the State Board of Education for their work on the state testing plan. He highlighted the importance of the teaching profession. He pointed out that many of the education issues have to do with accountability and funding, but the important part in the process is the kids.

He turned to the subject of federal requirements for Alaska's accountability shifting back to the local level and the state's opportunity to ensure that the accountability system is credible. He cautioned not to consider the rejection of the AMP as the end of the process.

[9:01:40 AM](#)

LISA SKILES PARADY, Ph.D., Executive Director, Alaska Council of School Administration (ACSA), presented information on the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). She referred to the press release stating that Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) would issue a new RFP to replace AMP for the 2016-2017 school year. She stated that ACSA is pleased to see this happen as there was consensus to go in this direction. She

noted that ACSA is committed to continue to work with DEED to do a comprehensive review of Alaska's accountability system.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked what is going to be different in a new RFP for an assessment based on Alaska Standards. He questioned what changes ACSA and DEED would be looking for.

DR. PARADY deferred to the upcoming testifiers to answer.

9:05:29 AM

MICHAEL JOHNSON, Ph.D., President, Alaska Council of School Administrators, Superintendent, Copper River School District, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). He read the press release regarding the decision to move in a new direction away from the AMP test. He commented that behind the press release there were over two years of hard work and dedication by the Commissioner and his staff. He thanked them for their commitment to Alaska students and for remaining focused on improving student achievement. He thanked the superintendents, educators, and students who worked with DEED last spring and will again this spring to administer AMP. He also thanked the members of the committees for their countless hours working for Alaska students.

DR. JOHNSON related that Commissioner Hanley also noted in the press release that "the recent passage of the federal Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides new flexibility for the state in designing their assessment system." He goes on to say that "Alaska needs to take full advantage of the opportunity the new ESSA provides and time is of the essence for moving in a direction that better serves Alaska students." Dr. Johnson said he agrees with Commissioner Hanley. Rather than take the path of least resistance, he suggested focusing on developing education policy that reflects the culture, the courage, and the common sense of Alaskans. He cautioned to focus on the unique flavor of Alaskan values that would truly improve student achievement.

CHAIR KELLER opined that "local control" refers to families. He wondered if Dr. Johnson has any proposals to expand the role of parents in a new accountability system.

9:09:00 AM

DR. JOHNSON related that the Copper River School District uses the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment, and he understood that 36 other districts also use it. He said that MAP gives students, teachers, and parents the information they need to improve student performance, and it informs the public how

schools are doing. He suggested moving toward what districts are already doing instead of trying to create something new.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON discussed the issue of measuring students against the Alaska Standards and pointed out that ANSEP does not follow the Alaska Standards, but accelerates above them. He questioned if Dr. Johnson was advocating for changing grade level standards or the form and function of the assessment.

DR. JOHNSON explained that he would always advocate for raising the bar and raising the standards, however, the Alaska Standards went through a process and a lot of work and does not necessarily have to be revised in order to have an assessment that informs teachers and parents how students are doing.

[9:11:26 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS questioned whether a new vendor would provide what the state is looking for. He pointed out that it is known what the current vendor needs to correct.

CHAIR KELLER said Commissioner Hanley could respond to that question after the superintendent testimonies were finished.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON requested superintendents to address whether they want the MAP test to be used as the state assessment, and whether that vendor, who applied under the previous RFP will be considered now. He wondered if the real crux of the matter was that districts remained with the MAP instead of adapting to the AMP.

SENATOR HUGGINS requested to know the value of students taking the AMP this year if the state is going to get rid of it. He suggested that teachers will be asking this question.

[9:13:57 AM](#)

DEENA PARAMO, Superintendent, Mat-Su Borough School District, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). She stated that the Mat-Su District and many others were quite dissatisfied with AMP and now the State Board of Education has recognized AMP's deficiencies and has made the decision to sever ties with it. She hoped that superintendents would have input on the selection of a new assessment. She said the Mat-Su District believes that MAP can provide the assessment needed to inform parents and students.

DR. PARAMO addressed the question asked about the Alaska Standards. She discussed the reasons behind needing an

assessment in order to measure the mastery of students' skills. She said that MAP is a good test because it shows what students already know. She pointed out that MAP is not grade-level dependent. MAP was not successful in its bid because it did not have an end-of-the-year test, a summative assessment. She understood that the MAP vendor - Northwest Evaluation Association - is currently working on such a test. She stressed that the district needs timely information in order to change "what we do so that kids understand."

DR. PARAMO noted that her district implemented MAP eleven years ago and some of the biggest supporters are home school families. It is about keeping the district accountable and MAP does that.

[9:18:22 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked whether Dr. Paramo is suggesting that superintendents be involved in selecting a new vendor.

MS. PARAMO replied that she would like to be a part of the "gamba" or "where the value is added." She said it is the people in a school district who deal with tests who make the difference. She stressed that the value of including districts would be shown in the classroom and will improve education.

[9:19:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER requested that Dr. Paramo speak to the value MAP assessments provide to her district and the results of using that test for eleven years.

MS. PARAMO said the district "changed the game" by using MAP. She related that eleven years ago, 52 percent of students leaving grade 3 were at grade level. Also, many students at grade 2 had already mastered grade 2 standards. MAP and other assessments identified where students were currently at and added value to the system by allowing students to work at their current level. Accelerated courses have been moved to lower classes and, currently, about 80 percent of students leave third grade on grade level. Also, MAP has end-of-course tests that students can take when they are ready and can test out of courses. Education is more individualized now.

[9:23:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON said he appreciated that information. He pointed out that the state is required to use a summative assessment, but districts are working on a different focus for student learning. He asked how to make a summative assessment key to what Alaska wants in education, instead of measuring

grade-level Alaska Standards. He asked if there is an assessment that changes the perspective of the Alaska Standards to reflect student growth.

DR. PARAMO opined that the answer lies in the integrity of Alaska's education leaders. She explained that in her district, the school-based assessments (SBA's) were looked at "as a floor, not a ceiling." The standards were not used just to meet the SBA's. She stressed that schools should be looking for whether students require remedial classes. She suggested that standards provide information about what kids need to know, but educators need to look beyond standards for success, in order to keep education in balance. She agreed there is a need for an assessment that shows mastery of grade-level skills, but educators must also show that kids are growing in their learning. She noted that AMP was supposed to create a dynamic test in five years, but students don't have time to wait.

[9:27:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON noted there are 53 districts in the state that have grade-level standards and who are not required to address grade level growth. The summative test will only give minimum data on meeting the Alaska Standards. He asked if Dr. Paramo is suggesting a new test to push the state to have a growth model for all districts, as well as having a summative assessment.

MS. PARAMO stated that MAP assessments will do both; continue with the growth model and have a summative assessment that would meet state standards. She stressed the integrity and involvement of the whole state system in this process. She concluded that the key to learning is determining what each student needs to do next.

CHAIR KELLER said he considers the federal regulations a detriment to Alaska districts.

[9:30:18 AM](#)

CHRIS REITAN, Superintendent, Galena City School District, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). He said he agrees with Dr. Paramo and Dr. Johnson. He pointed out that there are no superintendents in Alaska that are afraid of student assessment. He maintained that the state needs both formative and summative assessments in order to measure student growth and strengths and weaknesses of standards.

MR. REITAN stated that the AMP implementation went well, the testing process went smoothly, but the data provided after testing was not useful for anyone. He requested a strong, robust assessment model, easy to access, and that provides both formative and summative information.

[9:33:37 AM](#)

SUE JOHNSON, Superintendent, Kuspuk School District, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). She said Alaska educators believe in assessment. She requested a better summative assessment tool that is aligned with the state standards and has meaningful data. She said AMP provided no information about instruction direction. She spoke of time wasted taking AMP and support for MAP.

[9:37:03 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS commented that the goal is to improve achievement no matter the size of the district. He asked if there were any differences due to the size of the Kuspuk District.

MS. JOHNSON related that her district has 340 students within 120 miles, and the requirements of Kuskpuk's students and teachers are no different than students from large districts. She noted her district uses Common Core standards and they want the same test results as all other schools in Alaska do. She described a site with 13 students K - 10 and one teacher, with a goal for all students to be successful.

[9:39:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON pointed out that MAP does not have a summative test. He asked if Kuspuk needs formative and summative tests.

MS. JOHNSON said both are used three times a year. They are looking for a summative test which would align with their benchmark tests and would provide information on how to move students to the next level. AMP does not do that, but MAP would. She concluded that they are working for their students to exceed the minimum standards.

[9:41:56 AM](#)

KEVIN SHIPLEY, Superintendent, Kake School District, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). He noted that in October he penned a letter signed by 18 superintendents expressing concern with AMP. The letter stated that when ESSA is reauthorized, the superintendents would

encourage the State Board of Education to make drastic changes to the current accountability structure. The department, superintendents, educators, business people, and parents, should help to create a more vibrant, long-term, and effective integrated system of standards, curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and review. He made suggestions as to how the system could be improved.

MR. SHIPLEY said the passage of ESSA allows the state to provide a system described above and set out in the 2012 Alaska Plan. He commended the Commissioner for his leadership and his decision to change from AMP, but he stressed that changing to another test does not solve the problem, only addresses the symptoms. He suggested making a systemic approach and integrating components from the last process used to choose a test.

He opined that Commissioner Hanley had it right in his 2012 introduction to the Alaska Educational Plan when he stated, "What is Alaska's vision for its schools and students? What are our goals? What attributes and skills do we want high school graduates to possess? What actions will meet these goals and make this vision a reality? In short, the vision and goals of in Alaska Educational Plan are our destination. The actions are the road map. Knowing where we want to go, we can determine if our expenditures of money and effort are efficiently and effectively getting us there. The public having a clear vision for our schools and students, can measure performance against the goals."

He concluded that the state can create a system to allow Alaska to be a leader in academic achievement for all Alaska children.

[9:47:20 AM](#)

DAVE HERBERT, Superintendent, St. Mary's School District, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). He said his district and community believe in accountability and has accepted the challenge to provide instruction aligned to more rigorous standards, and AMP does not provide the necessary data to inform instruction or help students improve their academic achievement. He said he does not understand how the state could spend the money, human resources, and time on a test that does not work. He suggested the new test provide useful data for schools, parents, teachers, and students.

[9:50:13 AM](#)

BOB CRUMLEY, Superintendent, Chugach School District, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). He voiced disappointment in the AMP test and applauded the Board, Commissioner, and department for their conviction for raising the bar for Alaska students and working in their best interests. He shared a previous district plan to achieve student success by developing their own tests to ensure that learning, not time, was the constant. He called the state exams secondary to their own tests. He encouraged DEED to include superintendents and district test coordinators when making decisions on the next RFP for a new test.

[9:55:02 AM](#)

ED GRAFF, Superintendent, Anchorage School District, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). He suggested that the new test provide information about what students individually already know based on the standards, demonstrates an effective use of resources, provides useful reports related to classroom instruction and parent understanding, and that can be used throughout the state and nation. He said his district supports more rigorous standards, accompanied by high expectations and accountability. He spoke of the importance of training and of implementation support for assessment practices, and adequate financing. He wanted to ensure that the time used for assessments is valuable, as is the need to inform parents about their students' progress. He shared that his district has goals for student academic growth and proficiency, and having meaningful reports helps the district align and allocate its resources

[9:58:40 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS said he has serious concerns about having enough time to get a new assessment in place for 2017.

MR. GRAFF agreed that it is extremely time consuming and requires the involvement of many stakeholders. He suggested that the process must start now and have a plan B.

[10:01:02 AM](#)

STEWART MCDONALD, Superintendent, Kodiak Island Borough School, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). He said there are 54 districts in Alaska made up of diverse populations and sizes. It is important to take time to understand the issue. He termed the state assessment "a single tool in the tool box." He spoke of the goal to have students college-and-career ready. He highlighted the programs in Akiak. He stated that Alaska needs an assessment that

includes formative assessments. He concluded that the test will be only a piece of the puzzle and the state needs time to choose a new one. He described the role of superintendents as partners with corporations.

10:10:10 AM

DAVID NEES, representing himself, testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). He stressed the need to have a summative test as required by ESSA, and said MAP is a formative test and not a replacement for AMP.

10:11:11 AM

At ease

10:11:38 AM

MIKE HANLEY, Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), testified during the discussion of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP).

10:12:04 AM

SENATOR STEVENS cautioned that adequate time be taken to decide on a new test. He wondered how to deal with the issue of teachers and students not valuing the AMP test which is to be given this April.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY said the decision to not continue with AMP caused a lot of anxiety. Moving forward with AMP was not feasible considering the loss of confidence in doing so from all of the stakeholders. This led to the decision to seek a new path and go as fast as possible to get something in place for 2016-17, but it will be a challenge. He said they need to take steps forward in a feasible and intentional way, and include stakeholders.

SENATOR STEVENS thought that a year from now the state may be unhappy with the new test if the process is not done right. He said "fast" is not necessarily right.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY agreed. He said we need to move together in a way that is right and makes sense. He noted there are significant changes in the new contract. For the previous RFP, stakeholders requested an Alaskan-made test that would address the diversity in the state. That was one of the strengths of AMP and there were no concerns about the test contents. He stated that MAP is an off-the-shelf assessment, with no Alaskan input, aligned to a national set of standards. He stressed the necessity of having a conversation about that.

10:16:15 AM

CHAIR KELLER said he appreciates Commissioner Hanley's leadership.

10:16:26 AM

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ congratulated the Commissioner for the courage to change. She asked how much the AMP contract cost.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY said it cost \$25 million; \$5 million each of five years.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ requested to see the next proposal in writing. She agreed it was a short timeframe.

10:18:04 AM

CHAIR KELLER thanked the presenters.

10:18:11 AM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Keller adjourned the Joint House and Senate Standing Committees at 10:18 a.m.